

# Student Support Services News

Hello everyone! The 2010-2011 school year is well under way. We hope you enjoy this edition of the *Student Support Services News!* Inside, you will find information that will explain what the latest happenings are.

This newsletter is an effort by the SSS administration and department liaisons to share important information to and from administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, the community and parents like you who are interested in providing the best educational opportunities for students in the Thompson School District. If you have a new learning strategy, a summary article from an educational journal, a funny story, updates on your classroom happenings or anything that you are excited to share with everyone, please send your contributions to **Sammi Spear** via district mail (Administration Building) or email at [spears@thompson.k12.co.us](mailto:spears@thompson.k12.co.us). All ideas & requests are welcome!

## ***Inside this Issue:***



*Don't judge each day by the  
harvest you reap, but by the seeds  
you plant.*

Robert Louis Stevenson

1850-1894

Scottish Writer

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# Fall 2010



Greetings and welcome to the 2010-2011 school year. It is hard to believe by the time you read this that we will almost be through the first quarter.

In this issue of our newsletter I would like to take a moment to introduce myself and the staff of our department.

I grew up in Pennsylvania and received my Bachelors of Science in Special Education from the Pennsylvania State University (go Nittany Lions!). After graduation I spent three years teaching in a middle school resource classroom in the towns of York and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Upon arrival in Colorado I spent the next five years teaching in a resource program at Greeley West High School. During my time in Weld County I received my Master of Arts in Special Education then went on to finish my Directors License at the University of Northern Colorado. Upon attaining my Directors License I came to work for the Thompson School District. I started my tenure in Thompson as the assistant director of special education under Karen Pielin. I spent two years in that capacity then became the Director of Student Support Services for five years. I have kept some of the previous responsibilities from my old job but am thrilled to have added Exceptional Student Services.

The most exciting part about my new role with the school district is the opportunity to work with such a dedicated and knowledgeable team. They are: **Charlie Elkins** – assistant director, **Mary Barron**-secondary coordinator, **Julie Olson** – elementary coordinator, **Beth Johnson** – family engagement coordinator, **Cecilia Gasner** and **Rhonda Ayres**- autism specialists, **Sammi Spear** – department administrative assistant, **Nichole Randazzo** – academic interventionist, and **Jessica Clanton** – behavior interventionist. I am also thrilled that I will continue to work with **Barb Long**, **Lynne DeSousa**, and **Rob Roth** – PBS coaches, **Jorge Garcia** - ELA administrator, and **Carol Swalley** – Gifted and Talented Coordinator.

We will be concentrating on three areas for this school year that align with the goals outlined by Dr. Cabrera and the Board of Education. They are closing the achievement gap, engaging families, and evaluating the current systems in which we operate. I will be seeking your input to help move the Thompson School District to become the best district in Colorado and beyond.

**Together we will: Empower to Learn, Challenge to Achieve, Inspire to Excel**

Respectfully Yours,

**Dennis Rastatter**

Director of Student Support Services



Left to right: Charlie Elkins, Beth Johnson, Mary Barron, Julie Olson, Jessica Clanton, Rhonda Ayres, Nichole Randazzo, Dennis Rastatter





**2010-2011**

**Family and Community Classes**

presented by Thompson School District Exceptional Student Services Team

6:00pm-8:00pm

Thompson School District Boardroom

800 South Taft Ave.

Loveland, CO 80537

**October 26th**--Understanding the Specific Learning Disabilities Diagnosis

**November 8th**--Exceptional Student Services Open House

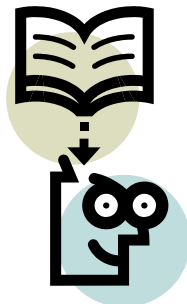
Join us for exciting updates on promoting academic growth!

**December 1st**--Understanding the Specific Learning Disabilities Diagnosis Process  
for the Community

**February 26th**--Understanding Data and Assessments

**April 26th**--RtI: How it all works together

**May 3rd**--Educational Activities to Promote Growth During the Summer





## **How Can the Autism Specialists Provide Support for You?**

- ♦ Provide current and relevant information on Autism Spectrum Disorders
- ♦ Maintain the district Autism Toolkit on First Class (Toolkit→Special Ed Tool Kit→Autism Resources)
- ♦ Maintain/expand the resource library at the administration building where materials are available for checkout
- ♦ Forward current research findings to keep staff up to date on what is “in the news”
- ♦ Provide information about pertinent continuing education on the area of ASD
- ♦ Help families of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) on your caseload connect and receive support through the Autism/Asperger’s Parent/Community Member groups
- ♦ Assist in identifying appropriate support strategies/tools including visual schedules, social stories, story frames, etc.
- ♦ Assist with the process/procedures for identification of ASD
- ♦ Lend assistance in selecting, locating and administering appropriate assessments for ASD students
- ♦ Attend SIT, IEP or informal meetings to provide support for staff and families
- ♦ Provide training and coaching in Verbal Behavior techniques and programming
- ♦ Coaching and training in implementing and choosing Social Skills programs and curriculums
- ♦ Provide ongoing training and coaching for teachers, aides and paraprofessionals working with students with ASD

### **Rhonda Ayres**

Intensive Learning Centers, Verbal Behavior  
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### **Cecilia Gasner**

Learning Centers  
Ext. 6771

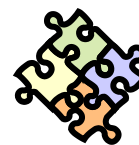
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### **Margi Scoufis**

SSIS/Social Skills  
Ext. 7440

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**August 15, 2010**

Watch for updates to the information in this brochure.

## Autism Spectrum Disorder Trainings 2010-2011

Register online at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Autism.asp>

### Level 1 and Level 2 trainings

**An Introduction workshop or similar training covering the same concepts is required before registering for a Level 2 training.**

### LEVEL 2 TRAININGS

#### LEVEL 1 TRAININGS

**Introduction** – This 3-day training is intended as a foundational workshop detailing the characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the introduction of evidenced based practices being used in schools. Some of those practices include: structured teaching, visual strategies, applied behavior analysis, behavior assessment and behavior plans, response to intervention and autism, positive behavior intervention supports, and sensory processing.

**Asperger Syndrome**—is a 10 week online Blackboard course which will be offered both fall and spring semesters. This interactive course will include readings and assignments. Participants may receive either 2 college credits or a certificate with 30 CDE contact hours.

**A Behavioral Approach to Language Assessment and Intervention for Children with Autism and Language Delays**

*Presented By: Dr. Mark Sundberg*

**September 9 & 10, 2010**

See flyer for more information

**Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS)** This workshop will focus on how to use the ABLLS tool to identify foundational learning skills for students. The ABLLS assist teams with determining what skills a student currently knows and what they need to learn.

**Social Skills** – A variety of strategies will be discussed in this workshop for students on the autism spectrum. Strategies will incorporate all age levels.

**Preschool** – This workshop will explore components of evidence based classrooms and settings for students with autism. Different models will be demonstrated.

**Progress Monitoring** – This workshop will incorporate how to effectively and efficiently collect data and make decisions based on that data for students. Academic, social and behavioral data will all be included.



**“Without knowledge of the symptoms, outcomes and even confounding attributes, it is nearly impossible for others to recognize and support AS individuals. Education. This is the key, the very accessible key.”**  
**Liane Holliday Willey**

#### School Nurses

This half day for school nurses will present an overview of autism spectrum disorders and the biomedical issues that often go along with this disorder. Medical, dietary and other common treatment will be discussed.

#### Child Find Teams

This training is for Child Find teams assessing children birth to 21. The manual *Screening, Evaluation and Educational Identification of Autism Spectrum Disorders*, which was co-authored by members of the State Autism Task Force and JFK Partners, will be introduced. The training will detail

Level 1 and 2 screenings and the recommended evaluation process using best practices for the educational identification of students 3 to 21 suspected of having an autism spectrum disorder. Screening children birth to 3 and recommendations when autism is suspected will also be covered.



Level 2 Trainings Schedule Times: 8:30 AM–4:00 PM

Register online at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Autism.asp>

**Level I Introduction: Teaching Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Practical Approach**

Times 9:00 AM–4:30 PM

Pueblo, August 11-13, 2010  
Fort Collins, September 22-24, 2010  
Lamar, September 29–Oct. 1, 2010  
Frisco, October 13 – 15, 2010  
Grand Junction, October 13–15, 2010  
Ft. Morgan, January 12–14, 2011  
Metro North, January 12-14, 2011  
Glenwood Springs, Feb. 15–17, 2011  
Alamosa, February 15–17, 2011  
Metro South, June 14–16, 2011  
See flyer for more information

**Autism Presentation for School Nurses**

Grand Junction  
December 2, 2010  
Sterling  
February 24, 2011  
Walsenburg,  
March 17, 2011  
Denver,  
April 7, 2011  
Glenwood Springs  
April 21, 2011  
See flyer for more information

**Asperger Syndrome Online Blackboard Class**

Fall class Sept. 20, 2010–Dec. 3, 2010  
Spring class Feb. 7, 2011– April 22, 2011

**Preschool**

November 12, 2010  
Pueblo  
December 3, 2010  
Metro North  
December 15, 2010  
Montrose  
January 7, 2011  
Metro South  
April 29, 2011  
Glenwood Springs

**Social Skills**

January 5, 2011  
Pueblo  
January 18, 2011  
Glenwood Springs  
March 3, 2011  
Metro South  
March 29, 2011  
Metro North  
May 5, 2011

**ABLIS Training**

November 9  
Metro South  
December 1, 2010  
Pueblo  
February 22, 2011  
Metro North  
February 25, 2011  
Glenwood Springs  
April 20, 2011

**Progress Monitoring**

November 5, 2010  
Glenwood Springs  
November 19, 2010  
Montrose  
February 18, 2011  
Pueblo  
April 1, 2011  
Metro North  
April 12, 2011  
Metro North

**Child Find Teams**

**Screening, Evaluation and the Educational Identification of Autism Spec-rum Disorders**

Durango, November 5, 2010  
Grand Junction, December 3, 2010  
Colorado Springs, January 21, 2011  
Sterling, February 25, 2011  
Loveland, March 4, 2011  
Walsenburg, March 18, 2011  
Denver, April 8, 2011  
Glenwood Springs, April 22, 2011

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

Melinda Graham, Autism Consultant  
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303 866-6691



## *Bilingual Briefs from the ELA Department*

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Instruction in the English Language Acquisition (ELA) Department is delivered almost entirely in English. However we encourage and promote the maintenance and continued development of the students' mother tongues. Multilingualism and multiculturalism are assets that the students and families bring to school and we are committed to building on those assets to prepare our students to be productive global citizens.

**Students on the Move:** Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives are the growth and achievement targets that are established by the State of Colorado for our students who are acquiring English. Thompson School District students exceeded the state's target in acquiring English and attaining English. In acquiring English the state's target was 48%. In our district we reached over 56% which is higher than the state's target for the year 2014. In attaining English the state's target was 5% and in Thompson School District we reached almost 7% which is the state's target for 2012. Our students are acquiring and attaining English at a pace that exceeds the state's targets. The third objective is in meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as a group of English learners and our students met all of these targets with the exception of mathematics at the elementary and middle school levels. Overall, our students are doing extremely well!

**Parents on the Move:** A Council of Parents of English learners has been established and has begun meeting. At our first meeting in September the parent group approved expenditures for a field trip for students at Mountain View High School and a professional development activity for teachers at Walt Clark Middle School. They reviewed growth and achievement data for their students across the district and decided to hold a mini-session on homework help at their next meeting. The parents received books and other materials in Spanish donated by the Mexican Consulate in order to help their children maintain and develop their Spanish language at home. This Council of Parents will continue to meet monthly to gain more information on supporting the achievement of their children in school, to monitor the budget and approve expenditures, to provide advice on before and after school programming and needs, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the English language acquisition program in meeting the educational needs of their students. Member parents set the agendas and run the meetings with support from the ELA Department.

**Schools on the Move:** Teachers across the district are beginning to provide more English language acquisition services in co-teaching and team-teaching settings. By providing more inclusive instruction, students will experience less fragmentation during their school day and will miss less of the instruction that is available in the regular classroom. This practice, well founded in research and best practice, helps address the needs of our students to meet AYP targets in both mathematics and reading. The regular classroom teachers and ELA teachers must work together and find time in their busy schedules to collaborate but many of them are doing this. They are to be commended for their work and dedication to the increased achievement of our students.

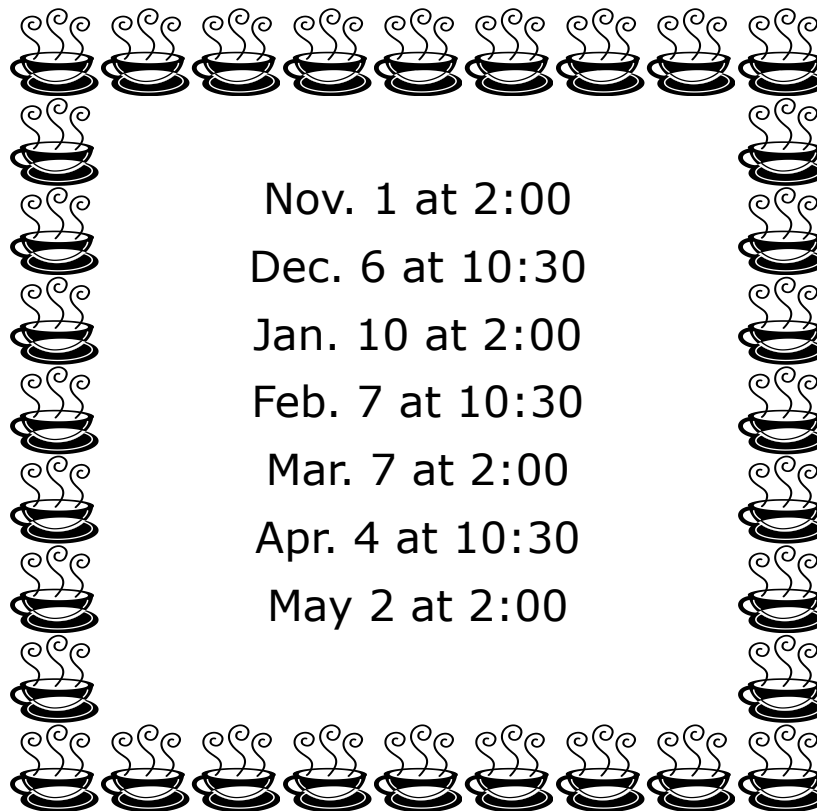
For information on English Language Acquisition, please feel free to contact the ELA administrator, **Jorge Garcia**, at 613-6083 or e-mail to: [garciajo@thompson.k12.co.us](mailto:garciajo@thompson.k12.co.us).



## Coffee Chats

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Coffee chats with **Dennis Rastatter** (Director of Student Support Services), **Charlie Elkins** (Assistant Director of Student Support Services), and **Beth Johnson** (Family Engagement Coordinator) have been scheduled every month. If you have questions, concerns, information you would like to share, or just want to chat over a cup of coffee, please join them in the Lily Room at the Administration Building on:



*A cup of coffee shared with a friend is happiness tasted and time well spent.*

### **Reading Interventions:**

We are thrilled to have our intensive reading interventions being utilized in all schools. Materials have been delivered and trainings are now complete!

We are offering interventions that include Language!, Read Well, Reading Mastery, and Corrective Reading. Language for Learning is also an important intervention we are offering students. There will be training for staff using this program on November 5, 2010.

### **Math Interventions:**

We have been hard at work researching intensive math interventions. We are hoping to have some programs in schools this year as pilots. Any feedback on programs currently being used in your school would be great to have.

### **Writing Interventions:**

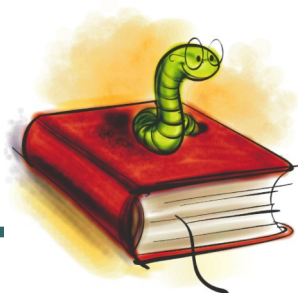
We will be focusing on writing and interventions this year as well. In the next few weeks we will be beginning the process of introducing Self-Regulated Strategy Development in writing. This is a behavioral-based writing intervention. We will be implementing it in a few schools to begin with and then moving forward from there.

If you have questions, please contact **Nichole Randazzo** at (970) 613-5035 or [nichole.randazzo@thompson.k12.co.us](mailto:nichole.randazzo@thompson.k12.co.us).

## *Social, Emotional, and Behavior Interventions*

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We are very pleased to begin the process of piloting several of the social, emotional, and behavior targeted and intensive interventions that were purchased last year. The following curriculums/interventions are in the process of being piloted in several schools through out the district: Coping Cat, C.A.T. Power, SSIS, SSRD, and First Step to Success. The PBIS District Behavior Team will be partnering with **Margi Scoufis**, Autism Specialist and **Nichole Randazzo**, Academic Intervention Specialist, in the piloting, training, and implementation of these interventions. In the month ahead **Margi Scoufis** will be offering a training and orientation to the selected pilot schools for the SSIS curriculum. As the year moves forward please stay connected with your liaison representative as the proposal process and access to these interventions will be through these wonderful representatives. If you would like more information about these interventions or are interested in becoming a pilot school please contact **Jessica Clanton** at (970) 613-6176 or [jessica.clanton@thompson.k12.co.us](mailto:jessica.clanton@thompson.k12.co.us).



What is going on in the world of PBS or what is now PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support)? Why the change? Positive Behavior Support has become so popular that Public Broadcast Systems (PBS) sued for the use of their acronym, leading to the move to PBIS.

Along with the name change, the universal PBIS team incorporated the intensive behavior component as well as restorative practices into the team, creating the PBIS District Behavior Team. The team includes the following:

- ♦ **Rob Roth**—PBIS coach for the Mountain View High School feeder system, Early Childhood and alternative schools
- ♦ **Barb Long**—PBIS coach for the Loveland High School feeder system schools
- ♦ **Melissa Perkins**, Masters in Social Work Intern from CSU helping with coaching and interventions at Centennial and Cottonwood Plains Elementary
- ♦ **Lynne DeSousa**—PBIS coach for the Berthoud and Thomson Valley feeder system
- ♦ **Jessica Clanton**—Behavior Specialist, focusing on intensive behaviors
- ♦ **Cheryl O'Shell**—Restorative Justice Coordinator
- ♦ **Michelle Malvey**—RtI Coordinator
- ♦ **Dennis Rastatter**—Director of Student Support Services.

The PBIS District Behavior Team has kept themselves quite busy, piloting the CHAMPS curriculum in nine of the district's schools. The goal of the CHAMPS program is to decrease behavior problems in the classroom. The team has also been conducting SWIS (School-Wide Information System), training for new schools, PBIS 101 training, which trained the new members of PBIS teams, and CPI (Crisis Prevention Intervention). The Problem Solving Process Advanced training is also coming up next month. Where do we find the time?

Some other great things to mention are, the combining of PBIS and No Place for Hate, which is an Anti-Bullying program, into the schools. A PBIS district video is being created, with the help of two wonderful parents, **Michelle Stout** and **Aviva Pfloch**. The PBIS District Behavior Team received the Expelled and At-Risk Grant to implement Human Animal Bond in Colorado (HABIC) into four schools—Winona, Garfield, Van Buren and Sarah Milner Elementary Schools. The grant also helps to support PBIS coaching. HABIC is an identified human animal team that provides animal assisted therapy to individuals, with the mission to improve the quality of life for people of all ages through the therapeutic use of companion animals.

Through this work, the PBIS District Behavior Team is striving to prevent the development and intensifying of problem behaviors and maximize academic success in our schools.



## Co-Teaching

Exceptional Student Services has made a commitment to close the learning gap for students. We have identified research-based strategies that have proven to obtain the results we desire. One identified strategy is Co-teaching. Co-teaching is a powerful way to meet the academic needs of a variety of learners in today's classrooms.

To support the implementation of co-teaching in our district, a workshop provided by Kathleen Kryza was offered this past July. She shared practical tips, tools and strategies while teachers learned how to work together most efficiently and effectively, numerous ways to differentiate lessons that work best with two teachers, and how and when to communicate with their co-teaching partner. Co-teaching has the potential to a broad range of students' needs and abilities by utilizing the expertise of both general and special educators. Additional trainings in co-teaching will be offered in the future.

### Co-Teaching: What it IS, What it is NOT

Element of Co-teaching	Co-teaching DOES	Co-teaching does NOT
"two or more professionals"	involve at least 2 credentialed professionals – indicating that co-teachers are peers having equivalent credentials and thus can truly be partners in the instructional effort. The general education curriculum provides the instructional framework, with the flexibility of it being modifiable for students who require it (Fennick, 2001)	involve a teacher and a classroom volunteer or paraprofessional, many of whom have not had the professional preparation to co-teach nor is co-teaching an appropriate role expectation for them. This is not to say that paraprofessionals do not have important classroom roles – they just should not be asked to fulfill responsibilities of certificated staff (Friend, 2003).
"joint delivery of instruction"	mean both professionals coordinating and delivering substantive instruction, ensuring that both teachers have active roles. Co-teachers should work to ensure that their instructional strategies engage all students in ways that are not possible when only one teacher is present (Austin, 2001, Gately & Gately, 2001)	mean two adults merely being present in a classroom at the same time. It also does not mean that the general education teacher plans and delivers all of the lessons while the special education teacher circulates. Co-teaching does not involve taking turns lecturing to the whole group (Murawski, 2002).
"diverse group of students"	allow teachers to respond effectively to diverse needs of students, lower the teacher-student ratio, and expand the professional expertise that can be applied to student needs (Hourcade & Bauwens, 2001).	include separating or grouping students with special needs in one part of the classroom or along the fringes even if these practices are well-intentioned (Friend, 2003).
"shared classroom space"	feature co-teachers instructing in the same physical space. Although small groups of students may occasionally be taken to a separate location for a specific purpose and limited time, co-teaching should generally take place in a single environment – separating it from the practice of regrouping for pullout programs (Friend, 2003).	include teaching teams that plan together but then group and instruct students in separate classrooms (Trump, 1966, Geen, 1985).

## *Exceptional Student Services Advisory Committee (ESSAC)*

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**MISSION:** Our Mission is to actively represent students with disabilities and impact decisions made on their behalf to enhance the quality of educational services. This mission is to ensure the educational journey of students with disabilities through a partnership with families, teachers, support staff, other district staff and community.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the Exceptional Student Services Advisory Committee (ESSAC) is to assist, plan, and advise the Director, the Thompson R2-J School Board and families on all aspects of Exceptional Student Services (ESS) programming and support services.

**MEMBERS:** The committee will strive for the following composition: Families of students who are eligible to receive special education services, a school board member, the director of ESS, a principal; general education teachers; a professional or agency person not employed by the school district; and a member at large.

The Exceptional Student Services Advisory Committee meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month from 4:30-6:00 in Room 132 at the Thompson School District Administration Building, 800 South Taft. For additional information or if you would like to become a member of ESSAC, please call **Beth Johnson**, Family Engagement Coordinator at 970-613-5014 or send an email to [johnsonbe@thompson.k12.co.us](mailto:johnsonbe@thompson.k12.co.us).

*Children are our most valuable natural  
resource.*

Herbert Hoover

1874-1964

31st President of the United States

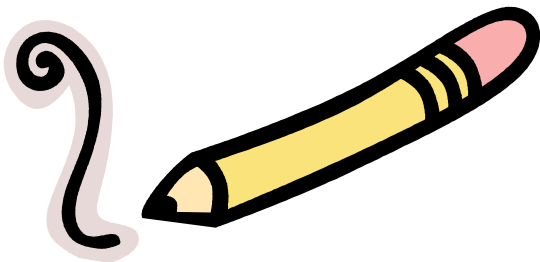






## **Melissa Perkins**

I wanted to introduce myself to the Thompson School District. I am currently working towards my Masters in Social Work at Colorado State University. I am interning with Barb Long as a member of the Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) team as well as working within three elementary schools which include Centennial, Cottonwood Plains and Coyote Ridge. I reside in Estes Park, Colorado where I have been for eight years. I have previous experience as a social worker in the areas of domestic violence as well as teaching. I am thrilled to be a part of the Thompson School District this year!



## **Holly Daley**

Hi! I am a new face in the Thompson School District and would like to introduce myself. This is my second year as a Masters of Social Work student at Colorado State University. I will be interning this school year within three elementary schools; Truscott, Van Buren and Namaqua under the guidance of Julie Ward. I reside in Estes Park with my husband Chris and our two children, Harrison and Samantha. I have previous experience as a regular classroom teacher and a special education teacher. I love the outdoors and enjoy traveling. I am really excited about working with your school district this year!

*We're dedicated gardeners.  
Just look at all we've sown.  
Thanks to our patience and caring  
See how much our students  
have grown.  
By allowing them to dream big dreams,  
and helping to make learning fun,  
we're planting seeds of success  
so each student is  
Number One!*

